

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

In accordance with Applicants' duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(a) and pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 - 1.98, Applicants submit herewith a copy of the documents listed on the enclosed Form, PTO-1449 "List of Art Cited by Applicant." Inclusion of a document in this Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement is not intended to constitute an admission that any document so disclosed is "prior art" with respect to the present invention unless specifically so stated herein. The Examiner may find the enclosed documents relevant to the invention of the present application.

The filing of this Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement shall not be construed to mean that a search has been made, or that no other material information, as defined in 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(a) exists.

It is believed that the filing of this Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, after issuance of a final Office Action in the present application, necessitated the filing of the accompanying Request for Continued Examination (RCE), which is addressed in more detail hereinafter.

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Initially, Applicants and their attorney would like to thank the Examiner for the careful re-examination of the present application.

Applicants and their attorney are pleased to note the allowance of Claims 6-10, as well as the Examiner's comment that Claim 4 would also be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the features of its base claim and any intervening claims (page 3 of the Office Action). Claims 11-20 have been rejected based upon newly cited prior art and these claims have been cancelled without prejudice as discussed in further detail hereinbelow.

Claim Amendments

By the foregoing amendments, Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form including all the features of its base Claim 1 (there were no intervening claims). In view of the amendment to Claim 4, independent Claim 1 has been cancelled and Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been amended to depend directly from rewritten Claim 4.

Allowed Claims 6-10 remain unchanged by the foregoing amendments.

Claims 11-20 have been cancelled by the foregoing amendments.

In the foregoing circumstances, it is hereby respectfully requested that amended Claims 2-5 be entered into the present application and re-examed on the merits.

Rejections of Claims 1-3 and 5

Claims 1-3 and 5 have been rejected on the following grounds:

- under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as anticipated by, or alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Collins et al. (US 5,998,543) (see page 2 of the final Office Action);
- under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as obvious over Collins et al. alone, or in view of Troy et al (US 5,599,854) (see page 3 of the final Office Action); and
- under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as anticipated by, or alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Inoue et al (US 6,130,288) (see page 3 of the final Office Action).

As mentioned hereinabove, Claim 4 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the features of Claim 1 and is, therefore, now believed to be allowable. Furthermore, Claim 1 has been cancelled and Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been amended to depend directly from amended independent Claim 4. In the foregoing circumstances, it is believed that the aforesaid rejections of Claim 1 have been mooted and the rejections of Claims 2, 3 and 5 have been overcome. Accordingly, amended independent Claim 4, as well as amended dependent Claims 2, 3 and 5, which depend from Claim 4, are all believed to be in condition for allowance.

Rejections of Claims 11-20

On page 2 of the final Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 11-19, under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as anticipated by, or alternatively, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Collins et al. (US 5,998,543). On page 3 of the final Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 11-20, under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as obvious over Collins et al. alone, or in view of Troy et al (US 5,599,854).

As noted hereinabove, Claims 11-20 have been cancelled, thereby obviating these rejections. Applicants hereby reserve the right to file one or more divisional patent applications directed to one or more of Claims 11-20.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, re-examination and allowance of Claims 2-5 are respectfully requested. It is believed that Claims 6-10 continue to be allowable.

If there remain any outstanding issues which the Examiner believes could be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is cordially invited to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss same at the telephone number provided below.

A fee of \$770 is believed to be due in connection with the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) that accompanies this Amendment And Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement. The \$770 is addressed by the accompanying completed RCE and Fee Transmittal forms

No additional fees are believed to be due in connection with the submission of this Amendment And Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement. If, however, any such fees, including petition and extension fees, are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees, as well as to credit any overpayments, to **Deposit Account No. 18-1850**. In the meantime, please direct all future correspondence relating to the present application to the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully Submitted,



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